



How can I manage disagreements with people at work?

Disagreements are an inevitable part of working life, and while they can be uncomfortable and challenging, sometimes they are necessary and productive.

They arise when our assessment of a situation doesn't agree with someone else's, and it's this difference in perspective that creates discomfort.

But when managed well, disagreements can spawn new ideas, change perspectives on issues and deepen relationships.

Even so, de-personalising the situation and skilful negotiation are vital to reaping the benefits of healthy conflict.

Here are some tips to help you achieve a 'win-win' outcome:

KEEP CALM

Self-awareness and stress management are important in pressure situations.

Once you start to feel upset or angry, take some deep breaths. Four deep breaths in and four controlled breaths out can help you to calm down and think rationally.

DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT

Identify the things you won't compromise on and try to be flexible about everything else. You can build better relationships by understanding both sides of the equation.



TALK AND LISTEN

Good communication skills are paramount. Using open questions can help you to understand the other person's point of view and find areas for compromise.

But don't forget to clearly express your own views and needs. Using diagrams and writing things down can help clarify what you want.

BE CREATIVE

To find a solution that will meet everyone's core needs, take a moment to step back and consider the situation from many angles.

Know when to back away

If emotions start to run high and the argument turns personal, back off and revisit the issue later. Comments like "I think we should take a break" or "I need some time to think, can we chat after lunch?" can give both of you a chance to calm down.

This is especially important if there is any hint of aggressive behaviour.

TRY TO AGREE ON A PLAN

If possible, try to agree on a specific course of action to resolve the problem – it will help create a sense of closure.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Arguments are an inevitable part of life, but if you need help coping with a disagreement, seek out a trusted manager or friend, or contact your Employee Assistance Program.

We would like to thank Centre for Corporate Health (cfch.com.au) for their assistance in the compilation of this factsheet.



Corporate Mental Health Alliance AUSTRALIA

The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: cmhaa.org.au

LinkedIn: [Corporate Mental Health Alliance Australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/corporate-mental-health-alliance-australia)



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